

Any questions, comments or concerns about the minutes should be addressed to Amy Giroux, Zoning Administrator at (802) 868-3325

**MINUTES  
TOWN OF SWANTON  
SWANTON PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
Town Office Building  
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488  
*Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.***

Present: Ed Daniel, Chair; Ross Lavoie, Vice Chair; Andy LaRocque, Oliver Manning, Members; Amy Giroux, Zoning Administrator; Joseph Cava, Administrative Assistant; Corey Parent, Forty-Four Seven Strategies, LLC

\*All motions carried unanimously unless specified otherwise.

1. Call to Order – Mr. Daniel called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
2. Agenda Review
3. Review of minutes of January 18, 2023

Mr. LaRocque made a motion to approve the draft minutes from the 1/18/23 Planning Commission meeting, seconded by Mr. Manning. Motion carried.

4. Municipal Plan Editing

Mr. Parent recommended meeting February 8, 2023 in addition to the next scheduled meeting on February 15, 2023 to push through the initial draft stages. Moving on, Mr. Parent highlighted repetitive redundancies that could be excluded from the chapters. Other mentioned highlights were including a piece about Swanton expanding water and sewer infrastructure to the Highgate Airport. This not only mentions the expansion of the airport, but its importance to Swanton's economic vitality.

Continuing from the last meeting's conversation, Mr. Parent mentioned where the Planning Commission left off on Chapter 5. Ms. Giroux mentioned the repetitiveness of this section and recommended an overhaul. Mr. Parent mentioned that many of these goals were environmental in nature and expressed that many of these things are regulated by the State, and could be removed. Mr. Manning mentioned the impact of the State on farms and how the strict regulations create a healthier environment. Ms. Giroux recommended shifting some of these environmental goals under recreation as an encompassing umbrella. Mr. Parent also highlighted environmental conservation and said that Swanton could benefit from a Conservation Commission to address local environmental concerns.

Other topics of environmental conservation included the dam in the Village which preserves Swanton's aesthetic beauty, but is deemed an environmental hazard by the State. Mr. Parent mentioned the Southern Growth district and its classification as prime

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agricultural land. This is contradictory to Swanton's goals to increase housing density. This brought up Vermont Land Trust which enrolls land perpetually. This is an issue because once lands are in this program it can't be reversed which creates problems for development rights. Mr. Lavoie mentioned that anything under 25 acres isn't considered for land trust. Mr. Manning mentioned that their farm puts measures in place to protect the local watersheds and reduce environmental impacts.

Shifting from land conservation, Mr. Parent recommended updating the figures on housing stock and long-term growth. Mr. Parent correlated this to the State trying to expand growth in high density areas like the Village where water and sewer infrastructure already exists. Goal 6.1 adequately addresses the need for affordable senior and low-income housing. Mr. Lavoie expressed the challenges of Swanton being cradled by the Missisquoi River which is a hindrance to development. This discussion on housing development led to cutting the section on housing for the physically and mentally disabled as an unjust characterization. Instead this section will be reworded and reworked into other sections of the municipal plan to address the importance of ADA compliance.

Mr. Lavoie recommended highlighting the expansion of existing infrastructure through the Village and Town without placing heavy reliance on other surrounding communities. The price on everything has gone up, and people building McMansions can't afford their vehicles. This relationship between housing and vehicles would be balanced by public transportation in areas like the village in favor of denser housing. Mr. Parent recommended hiring a consultant for a housing needs assessment to address the long-term housing in Swanton. Mr. Daniel highlighted a line in the plan that stated appropriate housing for all these groups and expressed the importance of housing for all.

Referencing other municipal plans, Mr. Parent highlighted plans like Hinesburg which consolidates many sections without having additional pages caused by fluff. Public sewer infrastructure for example could explore current capacity versus what permitted capacity could be. Public stormwater is currently a moot point and can be explored at a later date. Moving into the Swanton Electric Department, Mr. Lavoie recommended addressing the recent updates at the hydro plant to highlight Swanton's commitment to renewable energy.

Switching gears, Mr. Parent recommended turning the section on childcare into a goal to address Swanton's growing population of young families. Other goals like education are a given and should be their own section within the municipal plan. There are additional sections to discuss moving forward including education, energy, historical and cultural resources, recreation, and compatibility which were highlighted as part of the survey results.

## 5. Bylaw Changes

Ms. Giroux started by discussing the removal of hammerhead from the bylaws to incorporate the use of cul-de-sacs. This would benefit fire and emergency services that utilize cul-de-sacs as a quick turn around in the event of an emergency. Mr. Lavoie

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recommended having a joint meeting with the DRB to discuss these changes. Other changes like having a Knox box for access into multi-unit buildings require additional clarification. Ms. Giroux expanded saying that this would prevent causing damage to private property in the event of an emergency for services needing to gain access into a building.

6. Set Next Planning Commission Meeting Date

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

7. Public Comment - None

8. Any Other Necessary Business - None

9. Adjournment

Mr. Manning made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m., seconded by Mr. LaRocque. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Cava  
Administrative Assistant

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Ed Daniel, Chair

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Ross Lavoie, Vice Chair

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Andy LaRocque

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Oliver Manning

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Heather Buczkowski